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CONGRESSIONAL PROCEEDINGS

Forty-First Congress—Second Regular Session

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 1870.

BENNETT.—Presented a memorial asking the passage of an amendment giving women the right to vote. Referred to Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Poindexter also presented petitions in favor of female suffrage.

Mr. Davis said he desired to present a memorial to the Senate in favor of the same, but in favor of something practical, a memorial asking the abolition of the franking privilege.

Mr. Morrill, of Vermont, presented memorials in favor of the abolition of the franking privilege, and that it was very unhandsome in the Postmaster General to circulate the impression through the country that Senators and Representatives were guilty of a gross violation of the privilege, not to say that it would cost any \$500,000 to the Government; it would not save one cent.

Mr. Wilson did not believe anything would be saved other than the handling of private correspondence. It was a great burden to members of Congress, and he hoped it would be abolished, and also that the bill of Mr. Trumbull would be passed prohibiting members of Congress from franking letters for their constituents. Members of Congress, when they began to attend to their legitimate duties.

Mr. Trumbull expressed his belief that there had been gross abuses of the privilege.

Mr. Davis said it would be any means of economy.

Mr. Bayard, in presenting memorials on the same subject from Delaware, stated that one of the postmasters presenting these memorials, asserted that he did so under instructions.

Mr. Sherman said in the whole history of the Government, was there anything so flagrant as the conduct of the Postmaster General? To have these blank petitions at the expense of the public, and to be addressed to him by eight thousand subordinates, who hold their position at his will, with instructions to procure signatures to them, was a great criminal that would not have submitted to such a proceeding on the part of any other of the Government.

Mr. Trumbull said the Committee on Finance, especially House, had declared that the income tax shall be collected for the present year, with a verbal amendment.

Mr. Sherman explained that this resolution was passed in January, in view of the existing opinions of the law officers of the different Departments. The Judge Advocate General had decided that the tax expired during the last year, and the Paymaster General, in accordance with that opinion, brought it forward from the treasury of the army. Other Departments would deduct it, and this resolution was intended to declare the meaning of the law, so that all the officers of the Government should be in agreement.

Mr. Thomas was not in favor of legislative declarations of the construction of a law.

Mr. Sherman said that the people of California were mostly in favor of the tax, and that it would be a good measure.

Mr. Sherman said that the tax would probably be imposed on the United States, and probably in the world.

Mr. Sherman said that any artificial trifling with the proper interpretation of the Constitution would pronounce this tax unconstitutional.

Mr. Sherman would be in favor of extending the income tax as the means of reaching the large incomes of the rich, as against the small incomes of the poor.

Where taxes were reduced to a science, the income tax was regularly levied.

But this bill did not propose to extend the tax.

Mr. Sherman hoped the bill would go over to the Senate, and he hoped that the Finance Committee would bring it to a bill to exempt army officers from paying this tax, as he did not see how they could be their present compensation.

Mr. Patterson introduced a bill to abolish the Freedmen's Bureau and to provide for the Department of Education.

Mr. Farnsworth introduced joint resolutions proposing an amendment to the Constitution concerning the conferment of female suffrage. Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

The bill for the admission of Virginia was then taken up.

Mr. Trumbull felt it his duty to refer to statements which had been made here again and again after they had been refuted. Mr. T. read from the *Globe* the comments of Mr. Sumner on his (Mr. T.'s) "abandonment." His (Mr. T.) had in his criticism with Mr. Edwards as to the agreement in the Senate to the bill of Massachusetts, that the Vice President had voted for the loyalty of Mr. Porter, assuring that in his military trial he was the victim of persecution; that General Butler had afterwards publicly exonerated him of charge of disloyalty.

Mr. T. then proposed to the Senate the election of Governor Walker was the result of a gigantic conspiracy against the good people of Virginia.

The question was announced as on the subject of the bill. Dr. Drake, of Boston, T. then went on to show that there was no substantial difference between the Senate and House bills, and an agreement to vote on one could not be effected by the taking up of the other.

Mr. T. then moved to adjourn.

The House then, at 2:40 p.m., adjourned.

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